

Title: A Brief Analysis of the EU elections in Cyprus and the phenomenon of “Fidias”

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The outcome of the European Parliament elections in Cyprus was a surprise to all. For the first time in the country’s history, an independent candidate -the YouTuber Fidias Panayiotou- received more than 19% of the popular vote, translating to 71,330 votes. Fidas surpassed mainstream political parties such as the Democratic Party (DIKO), the Socialist Party (EDEK), and the far-right Elam, as well as approached the percentages of the second-largest political power in the country, AKEL, which ruled for five years from 2008 to 2013.



Source (<https://live.elections.moi.gov.cy/>)

But what really means for Cyprus?

One out of every six EU Members of Parliament will be a Fidias, representing Cyprus in the most consequential five years of the EU since its founding. The EU mechanisms will face numerous challenges, including rising populism and far-right voices, controlling border defence and EU-wide wars, high interest rates within the EU, and Euroscepticism. Fidias will therefore be able to cast a vote on each of the aforementioned issues, but what will he really vote on as an apolitical body?

The analysts have tried to identify the voting behaviour of the 71,330 individuals who cast their ballots for Fidias as the primary concern. They have also highlighted the need to understand the characteristics of these voters and their potential impact on the outcome of the election. Many analysts posit that Fidias voters are individuals who are disillusioned with the current state of political parties and seek to hold them accountable. However, some analysts believe that there is a shift towards an apolitical society, which is gradually transforming Cyprus. There is a growing perception that politics and ideologies are not having a positive impact on people's lives. Some observers also believe that Fidias is not the first apolitical elected candidate. They contend that the current president, Nicos Christodoulides, was elected with no substantial political positions but only relied on his support from parties considered to be in the centre, with no ideologies and relying on a customer-relationship with their voters. Therefore, for the first time, we see that Cyprus - which used to be a polarized country in political terms - began becoming an increasingly apolitical country, leading to concerns about civic disengagement and the erosion of democratic participation and accountability.